

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

- 1 1. A method of establishing a secure communication path  
2 between two computer systems comprising:  
3 creating a communication path to exchange data such as  
4 identification data and digital certification  
5 data between the two systems;  
6 determining, based on the identification data, whether  
7 to confirm the digital certification data; and  
8 creating a secure communication path, without  
9 confirming the digital certification data if it  
10 is determined the digital certification data  
11 should not be confirmed, or after confirming the  
12 digital certification data if it is determined  
13 that the digital certification data should be  
14 confirmed.
- 1 2. The method as described in claim 1 wherein the  
2 determining step includes the step of consulting an  
3 internal table, the internal table including  
4 identification data of all computer systems whose  
5 digital certification need not be confirmed.
- 1 3. The method as described in claim 2 wherein the two  
2 computer systems include a local and a remote computer  
3 system, the exchanged data further including one or  
4 more authentication proposals from the local computer  
5 system and a selected authentication proposal from the  
6 remote system.
- 1 4. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:

2 selecting an access method in response to determining  
3 to confirm the digital certification data; and  
4 invoking the selected access method.

5 5. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:  
6 selecting a local-remote pair from an endpoints table  
7 corresponding to the computer systems;  
8 selecting a policy from a policy table based on the  
9 selected local-remote pair, the policy including  
10 one or more access methods; and  
11 transmitting one or more security proposals  
12 corresponding to the selected policy to the  
13 remote computer system.

1 6. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:  
2 receiving a remote digital certificate from the other  
3 computer system; and  
4 verifying that a signing certificate included in the  
5 remote digital certificate corresponds to a  
6 certification authority.

1 7. The method as described in claim 1 further comprising:  
2 digitally signing a message using a private key  
3 corresponding to one of the computer systems; and  
4 sending the signed message to the other computer  
5 system.

1 8. An information handling system comprising:  
2 one or more processors;  
3 a memory accessible by the processors;  
4 a nonvolatile storage accessible by the processors;  
5 a network interface connecting the information  
6 handling system to a computer network; and

7 a network security tool to create a secure path  
8 between computer systems, the network security  
9 tool including:  
10 means for creating a non-secure communication  
11 path to exchange data such as identification  
12 data and digital certification data between  
13 the two systems;  
14 means for determining, based on the  
15 identification data, whether to confirm the  
16 digital certification data; and  
17 means for creating a secure communication path,  
18 without confirming the digital certification  
19 data if it is determined the digital  
20 certification data should not be confirmed,  
21 or after confirming the digital  
22 certification data if it is determined that  
23 the digital certification data should be  
24 confirmed.

1 9. The information handling system as described in claim  
2 8 wherein the means for determining includes means for  
3 consulting an internal table, the internal table  
4 including identification data of all computer systems  
5 whose digital certification need not be confirmed.

1 10. The information handling system as described in claim  
2 9 wherein the two computer systems include a local and  
3 a remote computer system, the exchanged data further  
4 including one or more authentication proposals from  
5 the local computer system and a selected  
6 authentication proposal from the remote system.

1 11. The information handling system as described in claim  
2 8 further comprising:  
3 means for selecting an access method in response to  
4 determining to confirm the digital certification  
5 data; and  
6 means for invoking the selected access method.

7 12. The information handling system as described in claim  
8 8 further comprising:  
9 means for selecting a local-remote pair from an  
10 endpoints table corresponding to the computer  
11 systems;  
12 means for selecting a policy from a policy table based  
13 on the selected local-remote pair, the policy  
14 including one or more access methods; and  
15 means for transmitting one or more security proposals  
16 corresponding to the selected policy to the  
17 remote computer system.

1 13. The information handling system as described in claim  
2 8 further comprising:  
3 means for receiving a remote digital certificate from  
4 the other computer system; and  
5 means for verifying that a signing certificate  
6 included in the remote digital certificate  
7 corresponds to a certification authority.

1 14. A computer program product stored on a computer  
2 operable medium for providing one or more secure  
3 connections from a computer system, said computer  
4 program product comprising:

means for creating a non-secure communication path to exchange data such as identification data and digital certification data between the two systems;

means for determining, based on the identification data, whether to confirm the digital certification data; and

means for creating a secure communication path, without confirming the digital certification data if it is determined the digital certification data should not be confirmed, or after confirming the digital certification data if it is determined that the digital certification data should be confirmed.

15. The computer program product as described in claim 14 wherein the means for determining includes means for consulting an internal table, the internal table including identification data of all computer systems whose digital certification need not be confirmed.

16. The computer program product as described in claim 15 wherein the two computer systems include a local and a remote computer system, the exchanged data further including one or more authentication proposals from the local computer system and a selected authentication proposal from the remote system.

17. The computer program product as described in claim 14 further comprising:  
means for selecting an access method in response to determining to confirm the digital certification data; and

means for invoking the selected access method.

18. The computer program product as described in claim 14 further comprising:

means for selecting a local-remote pair from an endpoints table corresponding to the computer systems;

means for selecting a policy from a policy table based on the selected local-remote pair, the policy including one or more access methods; and

means for transmitting one or more security proposals corresponding to the selected policy to the remote computer system.

19. The computer program product as described in claim 14 further comprising:

means for receiving a remote digital certificate from the other computer system; and

means for verifying that a signing certificate included in the remote digital certificate corresponds to a certification authority.

20. The computer program product as described in claim 14 further comprising:

means for digitally signing a message using a private key corresponding to one of the computer systems; and

means for sending the signed message to the other computer system.